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WILDLIFE DAMAGE CONTROL

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

by

Philip S. Gipson^{1/}

The second Wildlife Damage Control Workshop was a success. Damage control authorities and conservationists shared knowledge and philosophies regarding control objectives, technology and laws. This workshop differed from the first Damage Control Workshop (Henderson 1973) by treating a variety of wildlife damage including problems with nuisance birds and commensal rodents to feral animals, coyotes, and cougars. The first workshop focused on damage caused by coyotes.

It is clear from papers presented and discussions among workshop participants that wildlife damage may be controlled in a variety of ways. For example, in the Great Plains there are at least three approaches to dealing with damage caused by coyotes and other predators: 1. Extension, Kansas and Missouri. A staff of professionals work with landowners, teaching them to control predator damage and providing limited service assistance with difficult problems. 2. Service program, Nebraska. District Field Assistants provide help directly to landowners in controlling damage caused by predators. 3. Combination extension and service control, South Dakota. East of the Missouri River, extension assistance is available while west of the River direct control of predator damage is provided. There will continue to be a need for involvement from government agencies and universities.

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Private pest control operators may play an increasingly important role in and adjacent to urban areas.

Sport hunting and trapping may be effective methods of controlling damage by reducing populations of damaging species. Sport harvests of species such as coyotes may be especially helpful in the immediate vicinity of damage sites.

There is a need to provide current damage control information in a concise publication. Henderson's (1969) two-volume wildlife damage control handbook was an excellent beginning. At this workshop plans were made for wildlife specialists to update Henderson's publication. The target date for revision is June 1, 1976. The handbook will be reviewed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel. Copies will be available to government agencies, universities, private groups and individuals.

A number of innovative research projects concerned with wildlife damage were discussed. Improvements are needed in understanding cause and effect relationships associated with wildlife damage as well as better methods of damage control. Findings to date are encouraging, although a great deal more research is needed. Communication needs to be improved between researchers, professionals involved directly with damage control and persons experiencing damage from wildlife species.

Programs dealing with youth education in wildlife conservation were presented. Progress has been made in recent years in providing outstanding wildlife materials for youth.

Field trips and general discussions permitting exchange of colored slides and other visual aids were helpful, particularly to extension specialists.

Literature cited

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